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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
26 June 1963

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Analysis of the Latest Chinese Letter to the Soviet Union

1. The Chinese Communists, believing that they are riding a wave which may engulf Soviet pretensions to leadership of the international Communist movement, have increased their pressure against the Soviet party on the eve of the 5 July talks. Central in their renewed attack upon Soviet policies is their comprehensive letter, dated 14 June and handed to the Soviets the next day, in reply to the 30 March Soviet letter to the Chinese party. They have pursued their campaign through editorials in the Chinese party paper condemning the Soviet caution in Laos, criticizing the Soviet response to the President's American University speech, and intensifying attacks on Tito and (by implication) Khrushchev. A communique signed jointly with the North Korean party provided yet another vehicle.

2. The timing of the Chinese letter and some of its content suggest that it was planned to anticipate the opening on 18 June of the Soviet central committee plenum. However, its over-all content--it is a long, intransigent position paper, insulting in tone and bristling with unconcealed attacks on the Soviet party--seems intended more for the international Communist movement than for Moscow. It was immediately published by the Chinese, along with the other letters in the series, in a pamphlet which is being distributed in Moscow and the rest of the Soviet Bloc, as well as around the world.

The Chinese Letter:

3. Much more insulting and extensive than earlier Chinese letters to the Soviet Union, this diatribe runs to 30,000 Chinese characters, approximately 50 closely written English pages. It was designed to define more sharply than ever before the differences between the Chinese and Soviet Union on "25 crucial issues." The

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issues have been broadened. They now include the mistaken view of general policy the Chinese profess to see in Soviet words and actions, the USSR's incorrect tactics in foreign policy, its mishandling of problems in the international Communist movement, its exercise of "great nation chauvinism" in respect to other Communist regimes, and the degeneration of Marxism-Leninism in Soviet domestic doctrine and society.

4. Peiping's decision to set forth in so stark a fashion its rigid, fundamentalist views, in opposition to the somewhat more pragmatic Soviet approach, reflects its arrogant confidence, perhaps overconfidence, that it can subvert presently pro-Soviet parties by appealing to their rank and file over the heads of their "revisionist" leaders. The letter makes a transparent call to Marxists "inside and outside" these parties--including the Soviet party--to overthrow leaders who adopt "non-revolutionary" policies. Peiping's claim to be the only legitimate arbiter of "correct, Leninist" Communist theory and practice makes its determination to replace Moscow as leader of the international Communist movement clearer than ever before. The Chinese explicitly reserve the right to damn "anyone" who follows the "erroneous opportunist" line of "a certain socialist country."

5. The exposition of Peiping's position on the first 17 of the "crucial issues" is a succinct recapitulation of the argumentation the Chinese developed at enormously greater length during last winter's heightened exchange of polemics. Condensing the argumentation, however, has the effect of highlighting the differences between the Chinese and the Soviet party, virtually ruling out any possibility for meaningful compromise. Peiping rudely dismisses Moscow's attempt to establish as the "general line" for Communist policy its views on the necessity for peaceful coexistence, its realistic appraisal of the menace of nuclear war, and its assertion of the possibility of negotiating outstanding dangerous issues with the West. In place of this, the Chinese advance their own "general line." This includes Bloc unity on the basis of the Chinese interpretation of the statements of the 1957 and 1960 Moscow meetings of world Communist leaders, intransigent opposition to United States "imperialism," militant support for revolutions, and renewed warnings against over-reliance on negotiations to the detriment of revolution.

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6. In its 30 March letter, Moscow tried to deflect some of the fire of the Chinese attack by describing its relations with the Albanian and Yugoslav parties as peripheral issues; Peiping elevates them to "crucial principles." The question of Soviet-Albanian relations is called "an outstanding one at present," and Peiping insists that the CPSU must take the initiative toward readmitting Albania to the fold. On the other hand, the document reiterates Peiping's position that the question of the re-admission of Yugoslavia into the socialist camp is not negotiable. By asserting that "these two essentially different questions must on no account be placed on a par," Peiping rules out in advance the possibility of a trade hinted at by the Soviet party. The Chinese extended their attack on Tito in People's Daily the same day their letter was delivered to the USSR. Tito's May plenum speech attacking China was characterized as "spittle collected from the cuspidors of the imperialists and other revisionists," and the differences between the Chinese and the "modern revisionists" were baldly declared to be "irreconcilable."

7. The Chinese letter opened new areas for Peiping's withering condemnation. The Soviet party program, which had advanced some new theories involving the "State of the Whole People" and "the Party of the Whole People," are treated as doctrinally nonsensical, practically disastrous, a degeneration of Marxian theories of the State and the class struggle. Terming these ideas a "great historical retrogression" the letter implies that such views have led to the development of a "petty bourgeois" atmosphere in the Soviet Union which will inevitably lead to a restoration of capitalism if not stopped in time.

8. Another new area opened to Chinese attack is the recent Soviet attempts rapidly to increase integration of the Bloc economies under the Council for Economic Mutual Assistance (CEMA). Passages on these problems are clearly meant for sympathetic ears in Rumania especially, and elsewhere in the Bloc as well. Peiping has already reaped a small return on this investment. Rumania has published a long summary of the Chinese letter in its party newspaper. Although the summary omits the most polemical parts of the document, the simple fact of publication--set against the Russian refusal to print any of the letter--reflects Rumania's dissatisfaction with Bloc economic developments and indicates its growing willingness to act independently of Moscow.

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The Soviet Reaction:

9. The temporizing Soviet reaction to the heavy dose of venom emanating from Peiping suggests that Khrushchev and the other Soviet leaders are somewhat at a loss in their search for the best way to deal with their relentless antagonists. Although the statements from Moscow, including a decision of the central committee plenum on 21 June, accused the Chinese of "groundless, slanderous" attacks on the Soviet party, the Soviets have refused to counter even the blatant Chinese criticism of internal Soviet policies with a charge of interference in the affairs of another party. Clearly seething with restrained anger, the Soviet leaders have contented themselves with reaffirming their intention to maintain the entire Soviet line in the forthcoming meeting with the Chinese and with explicitly demonstrating that Khrushchev and his views have the entire, undivided support of the Soviet party.

10. The Soviet party's decision to maintain its pose as the champion of Bloc unity and non-polemics is an attempt to place on the Chinese the responsibility for the widening split in the international Communist movement while at the same time avoiding coming to grips with the sensitive questions raised by the Chinese. Moscow's refusal to meet on their merits the openly provocative Chinese attacks suggests that it fears that a renewal of the polemics will lead to greater Chinese successes in winning supporters within the international Communist movement. Since the Chinese have made it clear that they will continue their oblique attacks anyway and have threatened in their letter to extend them to direct and personal attacks on Soviet leaders, this can only be a temporary Soviet solution.

Prospects for the Talks:

11. Each side has indicated that it intends to go ahead with the bilateral negotiations now scheduled to open on 5 July. The recent exchanges, however, make it clear that each looks upon the talks as but another forum in which to continue their contest and not as negotiations which might lead to some amelioration of their strained relations. The meetings are certain to be acrimonious in the extreme and will probably be used by each party to demonstrate that it made every effort to maintain unity and that the responsibility for the failure is due

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to the intransigence and erroneous views of the other. The Chinese will emerge from the meeting more righteous than ever about their attempts to undermine Soviet authority and replace it with their own.

12. Since each party has set forth diametrically opposed notions of what should be discussed, the talks may well founder on the procedural question of the agenda long before they get to substantive issues. In this event, the Chinese are likely to insist that only an international Communist meeting such as the 1957 and 1960 meetings can resolve the problem and may demand the early convocation of such a meeting. The Soviets, who lost considerable ground in the last such meeting, are likely to stall as long as possible, asserting that sound preparations through further bilateral talks are necessary to ensure the success of a future international meeting. Eventually, however, they will probably be forced to agree by the desires of the smaller parties for an active role in discussions. Even more intense efforts by the antagonists to solidify their support among the other parties, and an increasingly rapid deterioration of the situation, is the certain result.

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